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INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCE AND  
EMPLOYEE SELECTION IN TWO CULTURES

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Communication, Cooperation, and Negotiation in Culturally Heterogeneous Groups  
Project Supported by the Advanced Research Projects Agency, ARPA Order No. 434  
Under Office of Naval Research Contract NR 177-472, Nonr 1834(36)

FRED E. FIEDLER AND HARRY C. TRIANDIS  
Principal Investigators

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Interpersonal Influence and Employee Selection  
in Two Cultures

Harry C. Triandis  
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Athenian Institute of Anthropos

Technical Report No. 60 (68-5)

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Abstract

From analyses of the American and Greek subjective cultures it was predicted that Greeks will give greater weight to recommendations by friends and relatives than will Americans, and Americans will give greater weight to recommendations by neighbors and unknown persons than will Greeks in reaching an employee selection decision. Sixteen hypothetical job applicants were presented to Americans working in Greece and to Athens employers. The predictions were supported. In addition, the Americans working in Greece correctly perceived the above mentioned Greek Tendency, and therefore perceived Greek employee decisions as different from their own. However, they generalized the perception of these differences to other characteristics, so that they incorrectly perceived the importance for the Greeks of interview impressions and objective evidence in reaching an employee decision. The data support a cognitive consistency theory analysis in which the decisions of people who are different on some characteristics are incorrectly generalized so that they are different on all characteristics.

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## Interpersonal Influence and Employee

### Selection in Two Cultures<sup>1</sup>

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There is evidence that various cultural groups can be characterized by different principles that control interpersonal behavior. For example, Triandis and Vassiliou (1967b) and Triandis, Vassiliou, and Nassiakou (1968) have argued that Greeks are much more sensitive than Americans to whether the person with whom they are interacting is a member of their ingroup or not a member of this ingroup. Specifically, Greeks behave cooperatively and with self-sacrifice within the ingroup; Americans behave cooperately and fairly within the ingroup. Greeks behave competitively, with suspicion and some hostility toward members of their outgroups. Americans behave with indifference toward members of their outgroups. Furthermore, the Greek definition of the ingroup is rather narrow, including mostly face-to-face interpersonal relationships, such as those among members of one's family, friends, and others who are concerned with one's welfare. Americans define their ingroup broadly, namely, as "people like me." Thus, Americans are concerned with similarity in cognition,

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<sup>1</sup> The data were collected with the support of the contract to study "Communication, Cooperation and Negotiation in Culturally Heterogeneous Groups" between the University of Illinois, and the Office of Naval Research and the Advanced Research Projects Agency (Contract NR 177-472, Nonr-1834(36), ARPA Order 454, Fred E. Fiedler and Harry C. Triandis, Principal Investigators). The analyses were carried out by Keith Kiltly. Helpful comments were provided by Martin Chemers.

race, religion, etc., as the basis of trust, while the Greeks do not consider this similarity as a sufficient basis for trust. Greeks are therefore suspicious of people they do not know, even when these people are other Greeks, of similar backgrounds, such as is likely to be the case with people who live in the same neighborhood. Americans are more likely to trust their neighbors.

If these arguments have any validity, they could be used as a "theory" of interpersonal behavior in the two cultures. Deductions from this "theory" could be made and tested. The present report focuses on specific deductions and a test of these deductions. Specifically, it follows from the above arguments, that a Greek employer, faced with an employment decision, will give much weight to the opinions of his close friends, some weight to the opinions of his relatives, and will completely discount the recommendations of "unknown neighbors" or "unknown persons." On the other hand, an American employer faced with the same decision will pay attention to the recommendations of an "unknown neighbor" and even some attention to the recommendations of the "unknown person."

#### Method

Americans employed by a large American organization and Greeks employed by large Athenian companies were asked to complete a questionnaire in which sixteen hypothetical job applicants were described. Each applicant description was generated from a  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial design. The four characteristics were (a) "he has had excellent grades in school and all objective evidence concerning him is extremely positive" versus "he has had passing grades at school and all objective evidence concerning him

is adequate," (b) "he made an excellent impression in an interview" versus "he made an adequate impression in an interview," (c) "he was recommended to you by one of your best friends" versus "he was recommended to you by an unknown person," and (d) "he was recommended to you by one of your relatives" versus "he was recommended to you by one of your neighbors whom you really do not know."

The Greek subjects responded to a seven-point scale ranging from "I would definitely hire this person" to "I would definitely not hire this person." In addition, they responded to a "should hire" scale and to a scale concerning whether "the average Athenian employer" would hire this person. The Americans answered the very same three scales and an additional scale concerning the average American Employer's likely hiring behavior.

The two national samples were selected to be similar in sex and social class. The design of the study, following Triandis (1963), employed analysis of variance to determine the variables that control employment selection decisions. Specifically, the analysis of variance involved four within subject factors (objective evidence, interview impression and two sources of recommendations) and three between subject factors (nationality, sex, and social class).

#### Results

The analysis of variance was too complex for the existing computer programs. It was simplified by systematically dropping from consideration one of three subject factors. As a result, there are three analyses: one excluding the sex of the subjects, one excluding the social class and

one excluding the nationality of the subjects. The three analyses gave comparable results, as far as the main effects are concerned. Tables 1, 2, and 3 present these analyses.

The main effects of culture do not reach significance. The main effects of grades are significant at the  $p < .01$  level in all three analyses; those of interview impression are also significant at  $p < .01$  and recommendations by a friend are considered much more ( $p < .01$ ) than recommendations by an unknown person. On the other hand, the main effect of the contrast "recommended by relative vs. neighbor" does not reach significance.

The major hypothesis of the study predicts interactions between nationality and source of recommendations. As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the interaction between nationality and recommendation by "friend" versus "unknown person" reached the .01 level in both analyses. The interaction of nationality and "relative" versus "unknown neighbor" reached the .05 level in Table 1 and the .01 level in Table 2. Most of the other interactions are nonsignificant and when they are significant they control very little variance. All interactions are in the hypothesized direction. Table 4 presents the relevant means. As can be seen, the difference between friend and unknown person for the Greek subjects is very substantial. For the Americans it is of lesser importance. Recommendation by a relative and a friend or neighbor and a friend are equivalently important for the Greeks; the Americans prefer the neighbor to the relative. On the other hand a person who is recommended by two unknown people has very little chance of being hired by the Greeks, while he still has a good chance of being hired by the Americans. The interaction among these factors is significant at  $p < .01$ .

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of the Hiring Intentions of  
Americans and Greeks of Three Social Classes

Source	df	MS	F
Culture (A)	1	7.47	< 1
Social Class (B)	2	29.81	< 1
A X B	2	34.16	1.05
Error (G)	80	32.44	
Grades (C)	1	171.85	20.83**
A X C	1	14.18	1.72
B X C	2	18.63	2.26
A X B X C	2	1.93	< 1
Error (C X G)	80	8.25	
Interview (D)	1	579.59	54.51**
A X D	1	8.60	< 1
B X D	2	46.68	4.37*
A X B X D	2	9.78	< 1
Error (D X G)	80	10.63	
Recommended by Friend vs. UP (E)	1	224.47	30.80**
A X E	1	84.33	11.57**
B X E	2	8.33	1.14
A X B X E	2	1.92	< 1
Error (E X G)	80	7.29	
Recommended by Relative vs. Neighbor (F)	1	5.48	< 1
A X F	1	38.42	6.33*
B X F	2	44.51	7.33**
A X B X F	2	17.79	2.93
Error (F X G)	80	6.07	
C X D	1	0.10	< 1
A X C X D	1	0.73	< 1
B X C X D	2	4.35	3.02
A X B X C X D	2	4.76	3.30*
Error (C X D X G)	80	1.44	
C X E	1	3.11	1.83
A X C X E	1	8.74	5.13*
B X C X E	2	2.44	1.44
A X B X C X E	2	0.41	< 1
Error (C X E X G)	80	1.70	

Table 1 (continued)

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
C X F	1	0.00	< 1
A X C X F	1	0.34	< 1
B X C X F	2	0.23	< 1
A X B X C X F	2	1.01	< 1
Error	80	1.08	
D X E	1	0.95	< 1
A X D X E	1	1.44	< 1
B X D X E	2	4.09	2.09
A X B X D X E	2	4.40	2.25
Error (D X E X G)	80	1.95	
D X F	1	1.74	1.22
A X D X F	1	0.35	< 1
B X D X F	2	0.26	< 1
A X B X D X F	2	1.07	< 1
Error (D X F X G)	80	1.43	
C X D X E	1	2.16	< 1
A X C X D X E	1	8.79	2.79
B X C X D X E	2	1.68	< 1
A X B X C X D X E	2	5.08	2.17
Error (C X D X E X G)	80	2.34	
C X D X F	1	2.86	1.29
A X C X D X F	1	0.10	< 1
B X C X D X F	2	4.22	1.91
A X B X C X D X F	2	1.40	< 1
Error (C X D X F X G)	80	2.21	
E X F	1	40.97	21.45**
A X E X F	1	14.80	7.75**
B X E X F	2	16.54	8.66**
A X B X E X F	2	16.86	8.83**
Error (E X F X G)	80	1.91	
C X E X F	1	0.10	< 1
A X C X E X F	1	1.70	< 1
B X C X E X F	2	3.28	1.46
A X B X C X E X F	2	3.37	1.50
Error (C X E X F X G)	80	2.24	

Table 1 (continued)

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
D X E X F	1	0.01	< 1
A X D X E X F	1	2.36	1.61
B X D X E X F	2	0.26	< 1
A X B X D X E X F	2	0.13	< 1
Error (D X E X F X G)	80	1.47	
C X D X E X F	1	0.08	< 1
A X C X D X E X F	1	1.27	1.26
B X C X D X E X F	2	1.00	< 1
A X B X C X D X E X F	2	0.07	< 1
Error (C X D X E X F X G)	80	1.02	

Note: Factor G is the Replication Factor

\* p < .05

\*\* p < .01

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Hiring Intentions  
of American and Greek Males and Females

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
Culture (A)	1	0.04	< 1
Sex (B)	1	19.15	< 1
A X B	1	2.86	< 1
Error (G)	82	32.78	
Grades (C)	1	175.84	20.60**
A X C	1	11.45	1.34
B X C	1	2.83	< 1
A X B X C	1	8.26	< 1
Error (C X G)	82	8.54	
Interview (D)	1	636.71	54.88**
A X D	1	0.00	< 1
B X D	1	11.57	1.00
A X B X D	1	1.44	< 1
Error (D X G)	82	11.60	
Recommended by Friend vs. UP (E)	1	254.22	36.82**
A X E	1	82.98	12.02**
B X E	1	30.74	4.45*
A X B X E	1	2.23	< 1
Error (E X G)	82	6.90	
Recommended by Relative vs. UN (F)	1	7.85	1.11
A X F	1	14.08	1.99
B X F	1	13.68	1.94
A X B X F	1	0.06	< 1
Error (F X G)	82	7.06	
C X D	1	0.64	< 1
A X C X D	1	0.00	< 1
B X C X D	1	2.58	1.68
A X B X C X D	1	2.39	1.56
Error (C X D X G)	82	1.53	
C X E	1	2.18	1.26
A X C X E	1	8.06	4.63*
B X C X E	1	0.13	< 1
A X B X C X E	1	0.11	< 1
Error (C X E X G)	82	1.74	

Table 2 (continued)

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
C X F	1	0.10	< 1
A X C X F	1	0.00	< 1
B X C X F	1	3.24	3.24
A X B X C X F	1	2.91	2.91
Error (C X F X G)	82	1.00	2.
D X E	1	3.22	1.50
A X D X E	1	3.30	1.54
B X D X E	1	0.00	< 1
A X B X D X E	1	1.30	< 1
Error (D X E X G)	82	2.14	
D X F	1	1.48	1.04
A X D X F	1	0.27	< 1
B X D X F	1	0.69	< 1
A X B X D X F	1	0.18	< 1
Error (D X F X G)	82	1.42	
C X D X E	1	1.92	< 1
A X C X D X E	1	9.90	4.14
B X C X D X E	1	2.76	1.15
A X B X C X D X E	1	1.33	< 1
Error (C X D X E X G)	82	2.39	
C X D X F	1	1.53	< 1
A X C X D X F	1	0.48	< 1
B X C X D X F	1	0.95	< 1
A X B X C X D X F	1	0.01	< 1
Error (C X D X F X G)	82	2.31	
E X F	1	38.10	15.91**
A X E X F	1	8.67	3.62
B X E X F	1	12.33	5.15*
A X B X E X F	1	2.35	< 1
Error (E X F X G)	82	2.39	
C X E X F	1	1.88	< 1
A X C X E X F	1	4.98	2.37
B X C X E X F	1	9.82	4.66*
A X B X C X E X F	1	7.54	3.58
Error (C X E X F X G)	82	2.10	

Table 2 (continued)

Source	df	MS	F
D X E X F	1	0.05	< 1
A X D X E X F	1	2.52	1.76
B X D X E X F	1	0.52	< 1
A X B X D X E X F	1	2.11	< 1
Error (D X E X F X G)	82	1.43	
C X D X E X F	1	0.24	< 1
A X C X D X E X F	1	1.40	1.40
B X C X D X E X F	1	0.21	< 1
A X B X C X D X E X F	1	0.75	< 1
Error (C X D X E X F X G)	82	1.00	

Note: Factor G is the Replication Factor.

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

Table 3

Analysis of Variance of Hiring Intentions  
of Males and Females of Three Social Classes

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
Social Class (A)	2	10.37	< 1
Sex (B)	1	10.34	< 1
A X B	2	4.25	< 1
Error (G)	80	33.14	
Grades (C)	1	178.50	22.42**
A X C	2	25.45	3.20*
B X C	1	1.03	< 1
A X B X C	2	19.52	2.45
Error (C X G)	80	7.96	
Interview (D)	1	611.88	59.85**
A X D	2	45.94	4.49*
B X D	1	7.14	< 1
A X B X D	2	23.73	2.32
Error (D X G)	80	10.22	
Recommended by Friend vs. UP (E)	1	294.56	37.79**
A X E	2	8.77	1.12
B X E	1	37.29	4.78*
A X B X E	2	6.33	< 1
Error (E X G)	80	7.79	
Recommended by Relative vs. UN (F)	1	20.37	3.12
A X F	2	26.47	4.06*
B X F	1	12.03	1.84
A X B X F	2	12.51	1.92
Error (F X G)	80	6.52	
C X D	1	0.24	< 1
A X C X D	2	3.32	2.19
B X C X D	1	2.94	1.93
A X B X C X D	2	0.12	< 1
Error (C X D X G)	80	1.52	
C X E	1	2.62	1.49
A X C X E	2	3.78	2.15
B X C X E	1	0.61	< 1
A X B X C X E	2	2.72	1.55
Error (C X E X G)	80	1.76	

Table 3 (continued)

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
C X F	1	0.02	< 1
A X C X F	2	0.36	< 1
B X C X F	1	4.15	4.00*
A X B X C X F	2	0.83	< 1
Error (C X F X G)	80	1.04	
D X E	1	3.68	1.78
A X D X E	2	4.93	2.39
B X D X E	1	0.17	< 1
A X B X D X E	2	0.82	< 1
Error (D X E X G)	80	2.06	
D X F	1	1.28	< 1
A X D X F	2	0.68	< 1
B X D X F	1	0.66	< 1
A X B X D X F	2	2.32	1.67
Error (D X F X G)	80	1.39	
C X D X E	1	2.77	1.09
A X C X D X E	2	1.20	< 1
B X C X D X E	1	3.34	1.32
A X B X C X D X E	2	0.54	< 1
Error (C X D X E X G)	80	2.54	
C X D X F	1	2.42	1.11
A X C X D X F	2	3.03	1.39
B X C X D X F	1	0.19	< 1
A X B X C X D X F	2	2.13	< 1
Error (C X D X F X G)	80	2.18	
E X F	1	48.08	22.36**
A X E X F	2	15.55	7.23**
B X E X F	1	15.77	7.34**
A X B X E X F	2	6.22	2.89
Error (E X F X G)	80	2.15	
C X E X F	1	1.42	< 1
A X C X E X F	2	3.01	1.40
B X C X E X F	1	11.18	5.18*
A X B X C X E X F	2	2.29	1.06
Error (C X E X F X G)	80	2.16	

Table 3 (continued)

Source	<u>df</u>	MS	<u>F</u>
D X E X F	1	0.11	< 1
A X D X E X F	2	0.16	< 1
B X D X E X F	1	0.41	< 1
A X B X D X E X F	2	0.31	< 1
Error (D X E X F X G)	80	1.49	
C X D X E X F	1	0.58	< 1
A X C X D X E X F	2	0.38	< 1
B X C X D X E X F	1	0.17	< 1
A X B X C X D X E X F	2	1.14	1.14
Error (C X D X E X F X G)	80	1.00	

Note: Factor G is the Replication Factor

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

Table 4

Means of the Judgments of American and Greek  
Subjects by Source of Recommendation  
! Willingness to Hire (7-point scale)

	American Ss	Greek Ss
also Friend	4.5	5.3
Recommended by a Relative		
also Unknown Person	4.3	4.5
also Friend	4.9	5.4
Recommended by a Neighbor who is unknown		
also Unknown Person	4.4	3.5

The differential behavior of the subjects, when the applicant is recommended by a friend versus when he is recommended by unknown persons can be seen to occur in Greece in all social classes, but it is particularly strong among the upper middle class subjects. It is also stronger in the case of female than in the case of male subjects. The latter phenomenon seems to be present also in the American data (see Table 5).

#### Additional Analyses

When cultural differences are reported, there is a danger that the reader will overgeneralize the size of such differences. It is helpful, therefore, to report that the rank-order correlation of the acceptability of the 16 hypothetical job applicants by the Americans and the Greeks is .75 ( $p < .001$ ). The point is not that the two groups of subjects see the desirability of the applicants in entirely different frameworks, but that they over- and under-emphasize different characteristics. The largest discrepancies in the rank-orders can be seen to involve job applicants with excellent grades, who made only an adequate impression in the interviews. The Americans tend to consider these applicants as highly desirable; the Greeks reject them. Apparently the Americans are much more aware of the limitations of interviewing than are the Greeks.

We also asked the subjects to rate the extent to which the applicants should be hired. We correlated the would hire with the should hire judgments, over all 86 subjects. The correlations ranged from .59 for the highly desirable applicants (possibly because of the small range of the scores) to .85 for the controversial applicant who made only an adequate impression at the interview, was recommended by a friend, had excellent grades and was also recommended by a relative.

Table 5

Means of the Judgments of American and Greek Males and Females  
on Willingness to Hire a Person with only Passing Grades  
(7-point scale)

	American		Greek	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Friend	3.9	4.5	4.8	5.6
Recommended by Relative				
UP*	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.9
Friend	4.3	4.7	4.8	5.7
by Neighbor				
UP*	4.0	3.8	3.3	3.3

\*Unknown Person

The third rating done by each subject was a judgment of the extent to which most employers in Athens would like to hire the applicant. The Greek subjects judged the set of 16 applicants as less acceptable to the majority of Athens employers than did the Americans ( $p < .01$ ). The high social class Greeks rejected the applicants much more than the other Greeks or the Americans, thus giving a culture by social class interaction ( $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the Greeks rejected those applicants who made only an adequate impression in the interview more extremely than did the Americans, thus giving a "culture by impression on the interview" interaction ( $p < .01$ ). There was a strong interaction between the two kinds of sources of recommendation: when both friends and relatives agreed the applicant was very likely to be hired by the Athens employers; when friends and relatives disagreed the applicant was only slightly likely to be hired; if the recommendations came from unknown persons the person was not likely to be hired. Greeks perceive Athens employers as very unwilling to hire anyone who does not have an excellent record and recommendations; Americans perceive the Athens employers as quite lenient and not too concerned with the excellence of the applicants, particularly when the applicants are highly recommended by relatives. Thus, the Americans in Athens perceive the cultural differences which we reported in the early sections of this paper, but they exaggerate the importance of these differences. In fact, the Greeks are "cautious employers" and will not hire doubtful people, since the legal obligations of employers to employees, in Greece, are extremely expensive.

Finally, we examined the extent to which the Americans in Athens see differences between American employers in the U. S. and Greek employers, by computing the difference in their judgments on the "most employers in

"Athens" and "most employers in the United States would hire this person" scales. The analysis of variance of these difference scores shows the American subjects thinking that American employers would reject people with only adequate grades to a larger extent than the Greek employers (a perception which is in error, as per Table 1 since the A X C interaction is not significant), that the American employers would reject people who are recommended by a relative more frequently than would Greek employers (a perception that is correct as per Table 1), the American employers would reject people recommended by friends more frequently than would Greek employers (a perception that is correct, as per Table 1), and finally, that the American employers would reject a person making only an adequate impression in an interview more strongly than the Greek employers (a perception that is entirely wrong, as mentioned above). Thus the American perceptions of the way American and Greek employers behave in hiring applicants are strikingly correct on two points (the importance of friends and relatives) and strikingly wrong on two points (the importance of grades and interview impression).

On the two points on which the Americans are wrong, the pattern is as follows: they perceive cultural differences in the relative importance of grades when these differences are not statistically significant; they perceive Americans as more concerned with interview impressions when in fact they are less concerned than the Greeks with such impressions. It must be recalled, however, that both cultural groups give much importance to the interview (in Table 1 it receives about three times more weight than grades, almost three times the weight of a recommendation by a friend, and 100 times the weight of a recommendation by a relative).

The great importance of the interview impression can also be seen in Tables 2 and 3. Thus, the Americans are strikingly wrong in perceiving the Greek hiring behavior on exactly that characteristic on which both cultures give most weight. In other words, if the American subjects were to predict the behavior of the Greeks they would be quite wrong, although they would be correct in perceiving the importance of friends and relatives in the hiring process. The fact that Americans, working in Greece and with Greeks, make such errors in perception of Greek behavioral tendencies implies that simply living in a country is not enough to improve a person's ability to predict the behavior of members of that culture. Special training is required.<sup>2</sup>

#### Discussion

The characteristic way employed by a group of people to perceive and conceive its social environment was called by Triandis, Vassiliou and Nassiakou (1968) and Triandis and Vassiliou (1967b) that group's "subjective culture." Triandis and Vassiliou (1967b) described and contrasted the subjective culture of Americans and Greeks. Deductions made from these theoretical discussions were tested and supported in the present paper.

Specifically, the weight given by Greeks to recommendations of ingroup members far outweighs the weight given to "objective" criteria like grades. However, it should be realized that this behavior is not unreasonable when seen in the context of Greek subjective culture, since it has proved functional in previous stages of Greek history. During struggles for the maintenance of a social system (e.g. the 350-year long struggle of the Greeks to maintain their culture under Othoman occupation) and/or during social conflict, such as that produced by revolutions or war,

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of intercultural training, see H. C. Triandis, "Subjective Culture and Intercultural Training" in G. Vassiliou (Editor) Subjective Culture, In preparation.

the loyalty of other people is much more relevant for the effective reaching of goals than is their competence. If a person is recommended as a co-worker by a friend the probability that he will be loyal is high and this is the essential point of reference during struggles for survival.

When Americans and Greeks work together they develop negative stereotypes of each other (Triandis, 1967; Triandis and Vassiliou, 1967a; Vassiliou, Triandis, Vassiliou and McGuire, 1968). These negative stereotypes can be understood, in part, as reactions to the perception of the "other group's" behavior. However, such perception utilizes the framework of the perceiver. When the perceiver's framework does not include the relevant information about the subjective culture of the other group it is likely to lead to confusion, misinterpretation and even hostility.

Both Americans and Greeks value the efficient completion of work. However, Americans see systematic planning as essential for efficient completion, while Greeks see enthusiasm and loyalty as essential for the efficient completion of work. Our present findings must be interpreted within this context.

The present study also illustrates the tendency of people to over-emphasize differences between themselves and other cultural groups with whom they come in contact. While there are real differences between Americans and Greeks, the perceptions of Americans in Greece include not only these differences but also differences on other aspects which are not actually present. We have here, perhaps, a cognitive consistency phenomenon: the Americans see certain differences between themselves and the Greeks; then they reorganize their cognitions so that they see differences not

only on those traits on which there are actual differences but also on those on which there are none. It may be that it is easier to perceive another group as different in all possible ways, than to perceive it as both similar and different. Perhaps the latter way is cognitively too complex for the average perceiver.

The tendency to simplify our perceptions of other groups may be an important contributor to cross-cultural misunderstandings and poor adjustment among co-workers in international organizations as discussed by Triandis (1967).

The Greek case has probably some relevance for other traditional societies undergoing rapid social change. Behavioral patterns that are functional in one historical period may persist when they are no longer functional. Understanding the bases of cultural differences in the framework of the perceiver may help reduce conflict among co-workers of different cultures. Our study implies the need for special training programs designed to impart adequate information about each culture. More accurate perception of the other culture may lead to improved interpersonal relationships and may also have implications for studies of social change.

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**13. ABSTRACT**

From analyses of the American and Greek subjective cultures it was predicted that Greeks will give greater weight to recommendations by friends and relatives than will Americans, and Americans will give greater weight to recommendations by neighbors and unknown persons than will Greeks in reaching an employee selection decision. Sixteen hypothetical job applicants were presented to Americans working in Greece and to Athens employers. The predictions were supported. In addition, the Americans working in Greece correctly perceived the above mentioned Greek tendency, and therefore perceived Greek employee decisions as different from their own. However, they generalized the perception of these differences to other characteristics, so that they incorrectly perceived the importance for the Greeks of interview impressions and objective evidence in reaching an employee decision. The data support a cognitive consistency theory analysis in which the decisions of people who are different on some characteristics are incorrectly generalized so that they are different on all characteristics.

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